An Oifig Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Tástála agus Rianaithe,
Foireann Bainistíocht Feidhmiúcháin, Ospidéal an Dr. Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8,

National Lead Testing and Tracing Office, HSE
Dr Steevens' Hospital, Steevens' Lane, Dublin 8, D08 W2A8

30th March 2021

Deputy Róisín Shortall
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 17636/21 "To ask the Minister for Health the capacity of each of the five walk-in Covid-19 testing centres; and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy Shortall,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.
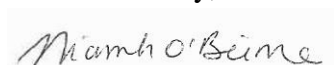
The HSE provides Covid-19 testing in the community as part of its pandemic response. As part of the HSE's enhanced Covid-19 testing for local communities, we have recently opened 'walk-in, no appointment necessary' Covid-19 testing centres to actively look for cases of Covid-19. These temporary walk-in testing centres allow people, who don't have symptoms of Covid-19, to get a free Covid-19 test without having to contact their GP first. They are opened in areas where the number of positive cases is particularly high and public health doctors advise a walk in would be helpful to disease management . Increasing the number of people we test will help us better understand how and why the virus is spreading quicker in certain areas.

I wish to advise five centres (Dublin North Inner City, Dublin North West, Dublin South East, Dublin South West and Tullamore) were opened on Thursday, 25th March and will operate for seven days. Each walk-in centre has the capacity to conduct between 300 and 500 tests per day and after five days of operation, over 9600 swabs have been collected with 529 swabs collected at the Dublin North Inner City location on Monday, 29th March.

The HSE Covid-19 Community Testing Service is committed to the timely provision of safe, accessible, quality swabbing services within the community setting.

I trust this addresses your question.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh O'Beirne

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Niamh O'Beirne
National Lead for Testing and Tracing